

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-13 OMB-01 DRC-01 /159 W

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R 201603Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3240

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USINT CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 5485

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TS, LY

SUBJECT: FURTHER INSIGHT INTO BOURGUIBA'S MEETING WITH
QADHAFI

1. DURING MEETING WITH HABIB BOURGUIBA, JR. SEPT. 19, LATTER INFORMED ME THAT HIS FATHER, PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA, VISITED LIBYA SEPTEMBER 1 AS RESULT OF PERSISTENT REQUESTS FROM QADHAFI. ACCORDING TO BOURGUIBA, JR., QADHAFI PLACED FOUR CALLS TO PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA IN COURSE OF LAST TWO DAYS OF AUGUST URGING BOURGUIBA TO COME AND TO BRING HIS WIFE, WASSILA. BOURGUIBA, JR. WENT ON TO SAY THAT HALF HOUR BEFORE HIS FATHER DEPARTED FOR TRIPOLI HE CALLED PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENNE TO INFORM HIM OF HIS TRIP. HE WANTED BOUMEDIENNE TO UNDERSTAND THAT HE WAS GOING AT QADHAFI'S REQUEST.

2. ACCORDING TO BOURGUIBA, JR., WHO CLAIMED HE WAS PRESENT DURING TELEPHONIC EXCHANGE, BOUMEDIENNE ASKED WHETHER PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA WAS GOING TO TRIPOLI TO CELEBRATE EGYPTIAN-LIBYAN UNITY. PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA REPLIED IN NEGATIVE, REMINDING BOUMEDIENNE OF HIS LONG-STANDING
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VIEW THAT UNITY NOT DESIRABLE OR ACHIEVABLE FOR SOME TIME.

HE TOLD BOUMEDIENNE THAT HIS VISIT TO TRIPOLI WAS FOR SOLE PURPOSE OF ATTENDING SEPT. 1 CEREMONY COMMEMORATING FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE.

3. BOURGUIBA, JR. SAID THAT QADHAFI'S ABSENCE FROM SEPT. 1 CELEBRATION WAS NOT RPT NOT "DIPLOMATIC", BUT THAT QADHAFI WAS DEFINITELY ILL. HE FELT SUFFICIENTLY BETTER FOLLOWING DAY TO RECEIVE PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA AND HAVE A LONG CHAT WITH HIM. HE SAID THAT WHILE PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA IS PLEASED AT OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH QADHAFI, TUNISIANS REALIZE THAT QADHAFI HAS NOT RPT NOT GIVEN UP HIS PLANS FOR ARAB UNITY, INCLUDING WITH EGYPT.

4. RE RECENT REFERENCES BY PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA TO BUILDING COMMUNITY OF INTERESTS BETWEEN TUNISIA, ALGERIA AND LIBYA, BOURGUIBA, JR. SAID THAT TUNISIANS HAVE IN MIND EVENTUAL CONFEDERATION, WITH EACH COUNTRY RETAINING ITS SOVEREIGNTY. REASON MOROCCO IS EXCLUDED AT OUTSET IS BECAUSE OF QADHAFI'S STRONG OPPOSITION TO MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT. ALSO HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT TUNISIANS ARE UNHAPPY WITH MOROCCANS SPREADING STORIES SEEKING TO UNDERCUT MASMOUDI AND WASSILA BOURGUIBA, WHO ARE REPUTED TO BE OPPOSED TO CLOSER TUNISIAN RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO.

5. BOURGUIBA, JR. SAID THAT ONE RESULT OF RECENT SUCCESSFUL DIALOGUES BETWEEN PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA AND QADHAFI HAS BEEN THAT TUNISIAN-LIBYAN JOINT WORKING COMMITTEES, ESTABLISHED AFTER QADHAFI'S VISIT TO TUNISIA LAST FALL, HAVE BECOME MORE PRODUCTIVE. LIBYAN PARTICIPANTS ARE ACTING MORE PRAGMATICALLY AND OPENLY -- WHICH TUNISIANS ATTRIBUTE TO NEW GUIDELINES FROM ON HIGH.

6. COMMENT: BOURGUIBA, JR. LOOKS AND FEELS FITTER THAN EVER AND, AS A RESULT, IS TAKING A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN AFFAIRS. HE ONCE AGAIN IS SEEING HIS FATHER ON A REGULAR BASIS.
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